

Henry LEAMAN

Born Dawlish, Q4, 1885
Sapper 498299 / 3477

Died of wounds, 21 December 1916, aged 31
Royal Engineers, 1st/3rd Field Company

Henry's grandfather Edward Leaman (1831-1916) was born in South Brent and was established in Torquay in 1871 with his wife Mary Elizabeth (formerly Ward)(1836-) and six children. They went on to have eight children (Cox family tree- Ancestry) including William Thomas Leaman, born in 1858.

William Leaman (1858-1933) married Ellen Allford (1855-1910) in the June quarter of 1876. She was one of seven children of Job and Susan Allford living at Hele Cottage, St Marychurch in 1861.

The Leaman family were well known in Dawlish. William Thomas Leaman had been elected onto the Urban District Council and was vice-chairman. He had worked in Torquay until he took a job as stoker at the gas works, progressing to manager by 1901. Later he became a magistrate (Kelly's Directory, 1930) and sat on the Dawlish Urban Tribunal. They had fourteen children of which three died by the census of 1911.

In 1901 the census return lists Louisa (1881-), Charles (1883-), Mary E (1884-), **Henry (1885-1916)**, Steven (1887-1918 -*see separate WW1 record*), Evelyn Maud (1890-1916), Floria (1893-), Edith (1895-), Frederick (1896-), and Herbert (1898-). **Henry** was the third son who, after leaving school and working as a groom, took a job with the railway in Bristol for about ten years before war broke out.

The oldest child, William Edwyn Leaman (1878-1960) was not listed at home. He, later, was the partial beneficiary of William Thomas Leaman's death on 11 April 1933, when he was described as a 'railway engine driver'.

Ellen Leaman died on 15 May 1910.

Henry Leaman married Blanche Irene Jefferies (1884-) in Bristol in April to June quarter of 1909, and they had a daughter Hilda Blanche Leaman in September quarter of 1910, while living at 10 Golden Street, Wells Road, Knowle, Bristol. There were two further children.

Henry followed a stoking tradition as a 'railway engine stoker', and is thought to have worked for the GWR locomotive department at Bristol for about ten years.

A report in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* of 2 January 1917 says that he left "a widow and three young children".

Henry Leaman enlisted in the Royal Engineers at Bristol and has a service record number of 498299. There is a further service record number of 3477 used in the Medal Roll index, and this is also given in Register of Soldiers' Effects.

He came home on leave in June 1916 for the funeral of his younger sister Eva (Evelyn Maud Leaman) who died of consumption at the age of 26. She had been the organist to the Wesleyan church in Dawlish.

The funeral also brought his older brother Charles Edward Leaman home on leave from the Royal Engineers. He had married Susan Jane Elliott in Dawlish in 1903, and he died in 1940. Three other Leaman brothers served in WW1; Stephen Leaman was killed in 1918 while serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers, leaving a widow, Elizabeth, and a child, Edith; Frederick Allford

Leaman served as an acting Corporal with the Royal Army Service Corps and Herbert Leaman also was a sapper with the Royal Engineers. They both survived the war, and Herbert married Doris Jane Ferris in 1926.

It is quite common that servicemen transferred from one unit to another and it appears that Henry was first attached to the 1st/3rd Field Company and then to the **2/1st South Midland Field Company of Royal Engineers** which included contingents from Gloucestershire. The Royal Engineers attachments to Divisions provided a range of support functions such as transport by horse, lorry or train, and telephone and other communications. Henry had been a groom and a railway engine stoker and found a natural place in the Royal Engineers.

The history of 48th (South Midland) Division

The South Midland Division was a formation of the Territorial Force. It was formed as a result of the reforms of the army carried out in 1908 under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane and was one of 14 Divisions of the peacetime Territorial Force.

1914

The units of the Division had just departed for annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to the home base. All units were mobilised for full time war service on 5 August 1914 and moved to concentrate in the Chelmsford area by mid August 1914.

1915

On 13 March the Division was warned that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began a week later. Divisional HQ and the **Gloucester & Worcester and South Midland Brigades** went via Folkestone-Boulogne while all other units went from Southampton to Le Havre. By 3 April the Division had concentrated near Cassel. The Division then remained in France and Flanders until late 1917 and took part in the following engagements:

1916

The Battle of Albert* *The Division held the line between the 56th (London) and the 31st Divisions, both of which were heavily engaged at Gommecourt and Serre respectively on 1 July 1916.*

The Battle of Bazentin Ridge* in which the Division captured Ovillers

The Battle of Pozieres Ridge*

The Battle of the Ancre Heights*

The Battle of the Ancre*

** the battles marked * are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916 which continued until November 18th, 1916 with lesser engagements in the weeks following.*

Henry Leaman is shown to have died of shrapnel wounds on 21st December 1916.

He is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour for Dawlish.

The Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour lists an H C Leaman, Lance Corporal, Devon Regt but no casualty of that description can be found and it may be an erroneous entry for H Leaman.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: LEAMAN H. SPR S.MID. R.E.

Devon Heritage site info:

Dawlish World War One Project

'498299 Sapper Henry Leaman of the Royal Engineers. Died 21 December 1916. Son of William and Ellen Leaman of the Gas Works, Dawlish (his father was the manager); brother of Stephen (below). Born in Dawlish in 1886. Died 21 December 1916 aged 30.'

Commonwealth War Graves entry: Leaman, H Sapper, 498299, 21/12/1916, Royal Engineers, 1st/3rd Field Coy. Grave Reference K. 15. [Aveluy Communal Cemetery Extension](#)

Last known address: 10 Golden Street, Wells Road, Knowle, Bristol

Next of kin: widow, Blanche Irene Leaman.

References:

Free Birth Marriage Death refs

CWGC records

1914-1918.net

Exeter & Plymouth Gazette

Refs via subscription website:

National Probate Calendar – William Thomas Leaman.

Census

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War

UK, Register of Soldiers' Effects

Cox family tree (Ancestry) and Leaman family tree (Ancestry)